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SUBJECT: SRE FIRM ON OAS DECLARATION ON U.S. BORDER SECURITY

REF: SECSTATE 176810

¶1. Political counselor demarched SRE's Director General for Regional Institutions Andrea Garcia Guerra and her deputy Juan Sandoval the afternoon of October 23, arguing that the Mexican initiative would be counter-productive at this juncture in Washington and could have a negative impact on the upcoming visit of president-elect Calderon. Garcia was unimpressed with both arguments and made the following points:

--Mexican officials, from the current president to the president-elect, have already expressed their concerns and displeasure in various domestic and international fora, in terms stronger than the draft Mexico has advanced at the OAS. SRE sees no reason why Mexico should not register its objections at the OAS, as is its right.

--The draft declaration has widespread support among Latin American and Caribbean members, who believe they have important equities at stake. The Central Americans had, in fact, encouraged Mexico to propose a declaration.

--While the declaration is an initiative of Mexico's OAS delegation, the language has been considered carefully in Mexico City.

--SRE will consider the political argument that the timing, in advance of the Calderon visit, is not good. However, at first blush, Garcia and Sandoval (who served five years as a member of Mexico's OAS delegation) did not believe the declaration would undercut the president-elect.

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